Muslims and Education in the U.K.

Ghulam Sarwar

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In the name of Allah, the most Merciful, the most Kind.

Introduction

Muslims have been living in the United Kingdom since the beginning of this century. There are about two million Muslims in the U.K. according to the most reliable estimates. Most of them come originally from Pakistan, Bangladesh and India. Others are from Cyprus, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Middle East, Africa and the Caribbean.

British society has many characteristics that are not in line with Islam. Living in a non-Muslim country poses many problems for the Muslims who have come here for economic reasons, studies and diplomatic purposes. The greatest problem is how to maintain a distinct Islamic cultural identity in circumstances where Western culture and civilization is dominant. Other problems related to this concern social, economic, political and educational aspects of life.

The need to preserve an Islamic identity was not a matter of great concern for the first generation of Muslims; but it has become crucial for the subsequent generations of Muslims born and brought up in the U.K.

This book outlines the educational problems of the Muslims in the U.K. and suggests some possible solutions. Many Muslim parents are unaware of the rights given to them under United Kingdom Law; so included in the book is a summary of these rights under the 1944 and subsequent Education Acts. It incorporates materials from replies given to a questionnaire sent by the Muslim Educational Trust to distinguished Muslim educationalists and community leaders.

The problems highlighted in this book mostly relate to Secondary Schools, but inadequate teaching of Islam, use of unauthentic books on Islam, provision of Halal food and the like, equally apply to primary schools.

It is hoped that this book will serve as a guide to education authorities, schools, teachers, social workers, Muslim parents, organisations, educationalists and all those who deal with the Muslims. Any comment or suggestion will be welcome.

London
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Educational Problems of the Muslims in the U.K.

1 The cultural identity of Muslim children.

This is by far the most important of the problems, since the loss of cultural identity threatens the very basis of the Muslim community. Positive efforts are needed to safeguard and support the distinct Muslim identity, especially among Muslim children. This includes the creation of a consciousness among them of their cultural background, heritage, tradition, faith and way of life. In our view this consciousness is vital for the healthy growth of a multi-cultural society which is now an accepted feature of British society.

2 The Permissive Society.

Western society in general is liberal, permissive and materialistic. A person is allowed to do whatever he likes regardless of any accountability and with few moral controls. A particular aspect of this is the flow and growth of obscene publications that reflect low moral values even by Western standards of decency. Muslim children living in the West are susceptible to the negative influence of the permissive society which contrasts with the restraining influence of Islam and the limits set on their lives by the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Effective measures are needed to combat the impact of permissiveness.

3 Living within two cultures.

At home, Muslim children are taught and encouraged to live according to their Islamic culture with its distinct beliefs and practices, customs and traditions, dress and diet and restrictions on the free-mixing of the sexes and on drinking wine. At school and elsewhere outside the home, they come into close contact with features of the Western culture with its materialistic outlook, family breakdown, free-mixing of the sexes, alcoholism and loose moral standards. As a result, a Muslim child faces a conflict within himself and care is needed to resolve this conflict so that the child can have a clear and fair view of both these cultures.

4 Teaching of Islam.

It is almost impossible for one to teach a religion other than one's own with objectivity and neutrality. Some Religious Education

teachers have been trying their utmost to do this in the course of multi-faith religion lessons. But the dangers of subjectivity and incorrect information cannot be ignored. It is essential that there should be Muslim teachers to teach Islam. But LEAs (Local Education Authorities) and individual schools have failed to appoint qualified Muslim teachers for this purpose. In some cases, there are schools without a single Muslim teacher where 60% of the children are Muslims (e.g. in London, Birmingham, Manchester and Bradford). Recently some efforts have been made by a few LEAs and schools to rectify the situation. We suggest that the young Muslims should be encouraged to take teaching as a career after their 'A' Levels. The LEAs should appoint qualified Muslim teachers at least in those schools which have a predominant Muslim population.

5 Use of unauthentic books on Islam.

This problem originated because of the lack of reliable and authentic books on Islam in the English language for use in British schools and other educational institutions. During the last few years a substantial number of authentic books on Islam in English have been produced in the U.K. Even so, there has been little effort by schools and libraries with a few welcome exceptions to acquire and use these books. The Muslim Educational Trust has published a book called *Books on Islam in English* to alleviate this problem.

6 Indifference of Muslim parents.

It is extraordinary how many Muslim parents are indifferent to the Islamic upbringing of their children. This indifference is at the root of many other related problems. If the parents are dutiful and persistent in discharging their responsibilities most of the problems discussed here do not arise.

7 Islamic Teaching in mosques.

The efforts of the Muslim community in arranging alternative religious education of their children in the evening and weekend are commendable. But, the quality of teaching is not always up to the standards of the teaching the pupils receive at school in other subjects. Suitable measures should be taken to improve teaching methods, the use of teaching aids and the pupil-teacher ratio.

8 Provisions under Education Acts.

Many Muslim parents are unaware of the facilities provided by the 1944 and subsequent Education Acts for the religious minorities. Consequently, a large number of Muslim children have remained deprived of the opportunities which are legally available to them.

The provisions are not adequate and Section 26 (b) of the 1944 Education Act is an example. In this section withdrawal from the main religious assembly of the school has been made a parental choice and the parents are responsible to bear the expenses of alternative religious education for their children. It is unfair that the main assembly is run at the tax payers' expense, whereas, the religious minorities, who are also tax payers, have to bear an additional burden to arrange for the religious education of their children.

Nevertheless, we recommend that the Muslim parents should avail the withdrawal facility and ask the headteachers of the schools to provide alternative religious education to their children and the parents should arrange for a qualified Muslim teacher to teach Islam in the school and the LEAs should be asked to pay for the salaries of such teachers.

9 Islamic education in schools.

In most State schools, few arrangements are made for Islamic education of Muslim children. Those which are available are so inadequate that they can be described in terms of "something is better than nothing".

10 Closure of single-sex schools.

There has been a dramatic fall in the number of school-going children in the U.K. and as a result a large number of schools are being closed. Of special concern to Muslims is the fact that this means there are fewer girls schools. This has created a very alarming situation for the Muslim parents who for religious reasons do not like their daughters of secondary school age to be educated alongside boys in mixed schools.

Islam has defined the rights and duties of man and woman in keeping with their obvious biological differences. Allah has not made man and woman identical and, therefore, Islam requires that boys and girls be educated separately.

We recommend that the LEAs should consider sympathetically

this point of view and Muslim parents should campaign to keep open as many girls schools as possible.

11 Mis-representation of Islam by the media.

National newspapers, radio and television networks mostly present Islam from a negative point of view and programmes on Islam are always presented without taking into consideration the feelings of the Muslim Community. Sometimes, irrelevant topics are brought up to create confusion. This sorry state of affairs may be due to (i) ignorance of Islam, (ii) confusing isolated incidents in Muslim countries with real and true Islam, (iii) failure to understand some Islamic concepts like polygamy, status of women, punishment for adultery, alcoholism, murder and theft, (iv) the Western media's undue emphasis on conflict. The media has a very bad record of not presenting Islam correctly and the situation demands a remedy.

12 Christianity in Education.

British society is overwhelmingly Protestant Christian and the education system reflects this feature. Besides Religious Education, subjects like History, English language and literature continually refer to matters of a specifically Christian nature. Efforts should be made to make Muslim children aware of the overall influence of Christianity in their school subjects.

13 Arabic Teaching.

Arabic is the language of the Qur'an and the Hadith. But there are few arrangements in schools for learning this language which is very important to Muslims all over the world. It is suggested that the LEAs should introduce Arabic language teaching in schools where there is a sizeable number of Muslim pupils.

14 Mother tongue education. (Community language of the Ethnic minorities.)

Very few steps were ever taken to arrange for mother tongue education of ethnic minorities until a directive passed by the EEC on 25th July 1977 (77/486/EEC) came into effect in 1981. Some welcome measures have since been taken by the LEAs, such as the appointment

of mother tongue teachers, the establishment of a multi-ethnic inspectorate, arranging course materials, etc. But the training of the teachers and the provision of resources and aids, as well as the inclusion of mother tongue teaching in the regular curriculum, have to be improved to make them effective and meaningful.

15 Halal Food.

Islam has clear directives on food. All wholesome things are permissible except pork and the meat of any animals and birds not slain invoking the name of Allah and this includes any food containing fat and lard of such animals. Halal (lawful) meat is available in the U.K., but LEAs have not yet taken measures to provide Halal food for Muslim pupils in schools. Some education authorities have issued directives to schools to bear in mind this difficulty for Muslims. The Bradford Education Authority has already started providing Halal meat to the Muslim children of 16 schools since September 1983.

16 School Uniform.

This is a sensitive issue, especially for girls and Muslim parents feel very strongly about it as it does not conform to Islamic requirements. Muslims are not against school uniform as such, but the style of British school uniforms means Muslim girls face the possibility of breaking Islamic laws regarding dress for women. Headteachers of schools with Muslim girls should be aware of this sensitivity. Muslim girls should be allowed to wear trousers, blouse with pinafore (or Shalwar-Qamis) matching the colour of their school uniform. Muslim girls of secondary school age should be allowed to use headcover (scarf) when asked by their parents.

17 Prayer facilities.

Some obligatory Muslim prayers fall within the school hours (e.g. Zuhr, Asr daily and Juma on Friday). But most schools have no arrangements to allow Muslim pupils to offer their obligatory prayers while they are at school. We recommend that a room be made available for this purpose. On written request from the parents a Muslim pupil should be allowed to attend mosque for Juma prayer on Friday if arrangements for such prayer cannot be made at school.

Rights of Muslim parents under various Education Acts.

1 School Assembly and religious education (RE).

Section 25 (4) of the 1944 Education Act provides that *"if the parent of any pupil in attendance at any County school or voluntary school requests that he be wholly or partly excused from attendance at religious worship in the school or from attendance at religious instruction in the school, then, until the request is withdrawn, the pupil shall be excused from such attendance accordingly".*

Section 26 (a) provides *"that if the parents of pupils at the school desire them to receive religious instruction in the school in accordance with the tenents of a particular religious denomination; and*

(b) *"that satisfactory arrangements have been made for the provision of such instruction of those pupils in the school and for securing the cost of providing such instruction to those pupils in the school will not fall upon the authority".*

Under the above provisions, all Muslim parents have the right to withdraw their children from the religious worship *(assembly)* and from religious education lessons. **The Muslim Educational Trust hopes that Muslim parents will avail the facility given to them by these provisions and at present sends 18 teachers to 66 schools in five cities to teach Islam to 3017 Muslim children. All these teachers are qualified Islamic teachers and the teaching is in the English language.** We urge upon the Muslim parents to withdraw their children from Assembly and RE lessons and also to arrange for the alternative education of children in their own areas. A form is provided at the end of this book on which Muslim parents can signify their wishes in this respect to the headteacher of the school.

We propose that the withdrawal should not be haphazard, it should be systematic and planned. If a school has a Muslim teacher he or she may be asked to take Muslim Assembly. Alternatively, the parents arrange for and pay an Islamic teacher who can teach in English. They can ask the Local Education Authority to pay salary to such teachers.

Islamic teachers who take assembly or provide alternative RE lessons could profitably use the syllabus, curriculum and text books

published by the Muslim Educational Trust.

Parents can ascertain what is being taught in religious education lessons and whether the school follows an Agreed Syllabus in which Islam is included. A careful scrutiny has to be made to see whether Islam is being presented properly and the recommended reading includes authentic and reliable text books.

In those schools where there are only a few Muslim pupils and a viable Muslim assembly or alternative RE lessons cannot be arranged, parents are advised to ask the headteacher to excuse the Muslim children from assembly and RE lessons and for the child to study the books — **Islam: Beliefs and Teachings** *(Secondary School)* and **Islam for Younger People** *(Primary School)* which have work-sheets in them.

2 Parental Choice.

Section 76 of the 1944 Education Act provides that *"the Minister and Local Education Authorities shall have regard to the general principle that, so far as is compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure, pupils are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents."*

Section 6 (1) of the 1980 Education Act provides that *"every local education authority shall make arrangement for enabling the parent of a child in the area of the authority to express a preference as to the school at which he wishes education to be provided for his child in the exercise of the authority's functions and to give reasons for his preference."*

Under these provisions, a Muslim parent can exercise a wide variety of choice on the education of his child.

I Choice of school. A parent should carefully study the booklets provided by the LEAs containing information about the schools of his area and make his choice clearly known to the Head teacher of the Primary School at the end of the child's primary education. This has to be done normally between the months of November-January of the Transfer Year. Under these provisions, a parent should name a single-sex school for his son or daughter and give reasons for it. On religious grounds, Muslim parents should insist on having an all girls school for their daughters. For boys, the insistence should be for an all boys school.

II Withdrawal from certain lessons. A Muslim parent has the right to ask the Head teacher in writing to exempt his child from such lessons as dance, music and sex education on religious grounds.

III Sportswear for Muslim girls. Muslim parents should ask the Head teacher, in writing, to allow their daughters to wear track-suits for P.E. and games and to wear a special costume for swimming. They should also ask for separate swimming arrangements for girls. Unless suitable arrangements could be made, the Head teacher should be asked to exempt a child from swimming.

IV Sports changing room. A Muslim parent should make a written request to the Head teacher of the school to make suitable arrangements for the changing for P.E., games, swimming, etc. Muslim children under no circumstances are allowed to be naked when showering. They should be allowed to shower with their swimming costumes on. The possibility of providing separate individual cubicles should be seriously looked into. Muslim parents would prefer that their daughters be allowed to shower at home.

V Other Matters. Muslim parents are free to make written requests to the Head teacher regarding uniform, Halal food and facilities for prayer, under section 76 of the 1944 Education Act.

3 Holidays on Religious Festivals.

Section 39 (b) of the Education Act provides that a child can be absent from school *"on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his parents belong"*.

4 Agreed Syllabus for RE.

Sections 26, 27 (6) and section 29 provides that the religious instruction in County and Controlled Schools be given under an agreed syllabus which has to be prepared according to the procedure given in the Fifth Schedule of the 1944 Education Act.

Fifth Schedule of the 1944 Education Act, section 2 (a) provides that *"such religious denominations as, in the opinion of the authority, ought, having regard to the circumstances of the area, to be represented"*. According to this section of the schedule the Muslims have a right to be represented in the preparation of the Agreed Syllabus for RE.

5 Establishment of Voluntary Aided Schools.

Sections 13, 14, 15 and 16 of the Education Act 1944, deal with the procedure for the establishment of Voluntary Aided Schools.

Under Section 114(2) (a) of the Education Act 1944, as amended, the Local Education Authority is responsible for defraying all the expenses of maintaining a Voluntary Aided or Special Agreement School, except those that fall to the governors under Sec. 15(3) of the Act or under the terms of a Special Agreement. This means for example that the local authority will pay the teachers' salaries and the cost of maintaining the school premises, but the governors must find the money for internal decoration. Central Government will pay 85 per cent of the cost of a new school building, or the purchase price of an existing school building.

Appendix II of a booklet entitled *Building work at Voluntary Aided and Special Agreement Schools* published by the Department of Education and Science (1979) mentions the details of Maintenance Contribution, Grant and Loan for Voluntary Aided Schools.

Suggested solutions to the educational problems of the Muslims in the U.K.

The problems listed in this book can be solved only through systematic and well co-ordinated efforts of the Muslim community. An attempt is made here to suggest possible ways to tackle these problems.

1 Muslim parents should avail of the opportunities given by the 1944 Education Act subsequent legislation. The relevant sections of the Act have been quoted on pages 12-15.

2 Circulars like the ILEA 81/156 and Local Administrative Memorandum of Bradford Education Authority should be devised by those LEAs which have a substantial number of Muslim pupils.

3 A memorandum detailing the demands of the Muslim community should be submitted to the Education Authorities and a regular monitoring process should be established. A list of demands appears on pages 18 and 19.

4 Efforts should be made to set up independent and voluntary-aided Muslim schools in areas where this is feasible.

5 There should be a campaign against the loss of girls-only schools where amalgamation takes place.

6 Muslims should provide a list of relevant and authentic Islamic books to LEAs, schools, libraries and other educational institutions, that authentic books can be taken out of use and replaced. The Muslim Educational Trust's publication *Books on Islam in English* may profitably be used for this purpose.

7 More Islamic books should be published for school children.

8 Parents should ask the LEAs or the individual schools to arrange for Muslim Assembly and a Muslim teacher be allowed into the school to teach Muslim children about Islam.

9 Muslim pupils should be allowed to take CSE, GCE 'O' and 'A' level examinations on Islam.

10 Muslims should participate in the Agreed Syllabus Conferences for RE (Religious Education) wherever they are formed.

11 Muslim parents should increasingly visit schools and explain to Head teachers the facilities which their children need on religious grounds. Mutual consultation is always helpful in resolving problems which may arise.

12 Muslim parents should remain aware of the anti-religious efforts of agnostic and secular organisations and should be prepared to counter them with reason and logic.

A list of demands to be submitted to LEAs.

The following is a list of demands which the Muslim community of different areas may submit to their Local Education Authority for necessary action:

1 Head teachers of schools should be asked to allow religious assemblies conducted by Muslim teachers where Muslim children are predominant. In those schools where there is a sizeable number of Muslim pupils, a Muslim teacher should be allowed to take Islamic lessons at least twice per week during the school assembly and such teachers be allowed to take registration of the Muslim pupils to ensure that time for the Muslim assembly is not less than half an hour.

2 Head teachers should be asked to ensure that the information booklets for parents should contain all the information relevant to their children (including the right of withdrawal), school meals, holidays, changing and showering and sportswear). These booklets should be translated into the appropriate languages when necessary (Section 6 of 1980 Education Act).

3 The LEAs should ensure that authentic and reliable books on Islam are used in schools and stocked in school and the local libraries. (A list of books on Islam in English should be supplied to the LEAs, school concerned and the libraries).

4 Head teachers should be asked to allow Muslim girls of Secondary school age to wear trousers and blouse with pinafore (or Shalwar and Qamis) matching the colour of the school uniform. They should also allow Muslim girls to wear sportswear compatible with their religious requirements.

5 Head teachers should also be asked to arrange separate accommodation for changing and allow Muslim children to wear swimming costumes while showering.

6 Head teachers should be asked to make a room available in the school for prayer when such a request is made to them by Muslim pupils or their parents.

7 Head teachers should be asked to bear in mind the dietary regulations of Muslims and make these known to the school kitchen staff to ensure that Halal food is available to Muslim children. LEAs having a substantial number of Muslim pupils should look into the possibility of providing Halal meat for school meals.

8 Head teachers should be asked to allow Muslim pupils to form a Muslim club on a request from the pupils.

9 Head teachers should allow Muslim pupils to be excused from dance, drama, music and sex education lessons when a request is made to them by the Muslim parents.

10 Head teachers should be asked to allow Muslim children to absent on the days of their religious festivals, e.g. Id-ul-Fitr and Id-ul-Adha (Sec. 39 (b) of the 1944 Education Act).

11 LEAs should keep as many single-sex schools as possible opened to meet the requirements of the Muslims of their area.

12 LEAs should ask schools to arrange for 'O' and 'A' level examinations in Islam for Muslim pupils who may opt for it.

13 Prayer facilities must be provided in the schools with Muslim children.

14 Adequate provision for mother-tongue education be made in those schools with children from different ethnic communities.

15 LEAs should appoint Muslim teachers and other staff in those schools which have a substantial number of Muslim pupils.

16 LEAs should actively co-ordinate with the representatives of the Muslims on matters relating to them.

17 LEAs should ensure that the Muslims are represented in their decision making process.

18 LEAs should subsidize the activities of the Muslim organisations concerning advice, youth forums, Qur'an and Arabic teaching, sports activities and the like.

19 LEAs should arrange for the training of Muslim teachers in the Teachers' Training Colleges to produce trained teachers for teaching Islam.

Appendix : I

A summary of the *Inner London Education Authority* circular **No.81/156** entitled *"Guidelines on Muslim pupils"* dated Sept. 1981.

School Assembly. Muslim parents should be permitted to withdraw their children from the morning assembly on a written request.

Islamic Festivals. Muslim pupils should be permitted to be absent from school to celebrate *Id-ul-Fitr* and *Id-ul-Adha.*

Friday Prayers. Muslim parents are allowed to withdraw their children for prayers at the mosque. Alternatively, a room at the school be made available for this purpose.

Swimming Lessons. A Muslim child should be excused from swimming lessons if a request is made by a parent. This will be applicable mainly to Muslim girls.

Changing for P.E./Swimming. Alternative accommodation should be arranged for changing.

Showers after P.E./Swimming. Muslim children may be allowed to wear their swimming costumes while showering.

Muslim Clubs. Muslim children should be allowed to form a Muslim club in the school.

Diet. School staff should be made aware of the foods not normally acceptable to Muslim pupils.

School Uniform for Girls. Muslim girls should be permitted to wear trousers provided they are chosen so as to be in accord with the normal school uniform.

Dance and Music. Muslim parents may withdraw their children from dance and music classes.

Sex Education. Muslim parents may be allowed to withdraw their children from sex education, to do alternative work.

Appendix : II

A summary of *Bradford Metropolitan Council,* Local Administrative Memorandum Schools 13 & 13 + Divisions No. **2/82.**

School and Community. Good co-ordination should be developed between parents and school authorities to discuss the problems faced by the pupil during the course of his/her studies.

Information to parents. Parents should be informed thoroughly about the school, availability of translation and interpreter services at parent-teacher consultations to ensure the best possible communication.

Assemblies. The 1944 Education Act gives the parents of any pupil the right to withdraw the pupil from religious assemblies.

Religious Education. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from religious education under the 1944 Education Act.

Religious Festivals. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from school for a whole day on the occasion of a religious festival of their faith. For the Muslims *Id-ul-Fitr* and *Id-ul-Adha* are the two major festivals.

Special provisions for Muslim prayers. Where a request is made by the parents, a room must be made available for Muslim prayers during the lunch period especially on Fridays. A Muslim Imam can lead these prayers.

Cultural Issues. There are strong Muslim reservations regarding the free mixing of boys and girls aged 10 and over, participation in drama, physical education (games, gymnastics, swimming and dance, especially in mixed classes) and certain fund raising activities including lotteries and gambling. Parental rights to withdraw children from these activities are also acknowledged as valid.

School Uniform. Parents wishing their children to wear traditional dress, should be asked to provide this dress in the school colours.

Physical Education. In middle and upper schools, separate changing arrangements for boys and girls must be provided. Boys and girls must be allowed to cover themselves during showering. The wearing of track-suits for Muslim girls should be allowed. Head teachers are asked to provide single sex P.E. and swimming with instructors of the same sex.

School Meals. The authority is considering the provision of Halal meat in schools and is actively investigating ways in which this can be done.

Appendix : III

Questionnaire on the Educational Problems of the Muslims in the U.K. and their solutions.

Name _____

Address _____

_____ *Phone No.* _____

1 *The following is a list of the educational problems of the Muslims in the U.K.*

i Preservation of the distinct identity of the Muslim children.

ii Christianity dominated education (e.g. RE, History, English Literature).

iii Negative influence of permissive society.

iv Indifference of the Muslim parents towards the Islamic up-bringing of their children.

v Conflict of cultures (Islamic & Western).

vi Insufficient and in most cases total absence of Islamic education in State Schools.

vii Teaching of Islam by non-Muslim teachers.

viii Use of unauthentic books on Islam in schools and other Educational Institutions.

ix Inadequate provisions of 1944 Education Act (especially Section 26 (b).

x Ignorance of the existing facilities provided by the 1944 Education Act and not availing them by the Muslim parents.

xi Systematic misrepresentation of Islam by the media.

xii Racial discrimination.

xiii Inadequate provisions of mother tongue education.

xiv Non provision of Halal food in schools.

xv Closure of single-sex schools.

xvi Absence of prayer facilities in schools.

xvii Unislamic dresses for Muslim girls in schools (uniform, P.E. and swimming).

xviii Lessons on music, drama, dance etc. for Muslim pupils especially Muslim girls.

Please serialise below your priorities if you differ from the above.

2 *Any other problems which in your opinion have not been included above in No. 1.*

3 *The Education Act 1944 provides the following :-*

Section 25 (4) "If the parents of any pupil in attendance ..... requests that he be wholly or partly excused from attendance at religious worship in the school or from attendance at both religious worship and religious instruction in the school, them, until the request is withdrawn, the pupil shall be excused from such attendance accordingly".

Section 26. If the Local Education Authority is satisfied —

(a) "that the parents of pupil in attendance at the school in accordance with the tenets of a particular religious denomination, and

(b) that satisfactory arrangements have been made for the provision of such instruction to those pupils in the school and for securing the cost of providing such instruction to those pupils in the school will not fall upon the authority".

Section 39 (b) allows a child to be absent from school "on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his parent belongs".

Section 76 "pupils are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents".

Do you think these provisions are adequate? If not what improvements do you suggest?

4 *Some active groups like British Humanist Association, National Secular Society and supporters of the free thinking movement consider the withdrawal clause in section 25 (4) of the 1944 Education Act as detrimental to free thinking and integration etc.*

What should the Muslims do in this regard?

5 *(a) Teaching of R.E. has to be according to an agreed syllabus which means we have to agree to the teaching of religion other than Islam to Muslim children.*

What should we do regarding this?

(b) Should we participate in agreed syllabus conference or we should go on insisting on teaching of Islam as separate subject?

(c) What in your opinion should be the steps to get representation in the decision making process of LEAs?

6 *A summary of ILEA circular 81/156 dated Sept. 1981 and Local Administrative Memorandum of Bradford Metropolitan Council's Education Department were given in the questionnaire and the respondents were asked:*

(a) Do you think the above directives are enough? If not, what else should be asked for?

(b) Do you think all the LEAs having Muslim pupils should be asked to issue similar directives?

7 *There are schools where more than 50% of the pupils are Muslims; what facilities can be pressed for in these schools?*

8 Suggested Solutions. *In our opinion the following steps should be taken to solve the problems mentioned above.*

i Avail of the existing facilities of the 1944 Education Act.

ii Make Muslim parents aware of their rights under the law.

iii Campaign against closure of single-sex schools.

iv To establish separate Muslim schools; both Private and Voluntary-aided

v United efforts on behalf of the Muslim community to get their rights accepted by authorities.

vi Pressing the authorities to allow Muslim pupils to sit for C.S.E. & G.C.E. Examinations on Islam.

vii Provide a list of relevant and authentic Islamic books to Education Authority so that unreliable books are not resorted to.

viii Publish enough Islamic literature in English for the use of Muslim children.

ix The present withdrawal system should continue where a Muslim teacher has not yet been arranged by the Local Education Authority for the school.

x Muslim pupils in Secondary schools should be given proper Islamic education within school hours by qualified Muslim teachers.

xi Funding of Islamic education in schools should be LEA's responsibility.

Do you think these steps are enough? If not, please suggest your own recommendations.

Signature _____ *Date* _____

Appendix : IV

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Appendix : V

Address _____

_____

Date _____198

The Head Teacher,

_____ School

_____

Dear Sir/Madam,

This is for your information that

I wish my child/children to withdraw from religious education lessons ☐

I wish my child/children to withdraw from assemblies involving collective worship. ☐

I do not wish my child/children to participate in the lessons of Music, Drama and Dance and Sex Education. ☐

I wish my child/children to wear a style of uniform including sportswear compatible with Islamic standards. ☐

I do not wish my child/children to eat non-Halal food in the school. ☐

I wish my child/children to be withdrawn from school on Friday afternoon to attend prayer at the mosque. ☐

Signed _____(Father/Mother/Guardian)

Date _____

* Please tick in the appropriate box.

Note : Please copy this form on a separate sheet and submit it to the Head Teacher of your child's school.

Appendix : VI

Select Bibliography

1	**Aims & Objectives of Islamic Education**	*Edited by Prof. S. Al Naqib Al Attas. London, 1979.*
2	**Curriculum & Teaching Education**	*Edited by Prof. M. Hamid Al Afendi & Prof. Nabi Ahmad, London, 1980.*
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3 **Syllabus and Guidelines for Islamic Teaching in Schools** (2nd Edition 1983) by — Ghulam Sarwar — Price in U.K. £1.25 (Post free)

4 **Third Primer of Islam** (On Salah) (1977) — Price in U.K. £0.60p (Post free)

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Ghulam Sarwar is the Director of the Muslim Educational Trust. He has an Honours Degree in Commerce and a Masters' Degree in Management from the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. For three years he taught Business Management in the City College, Chittagong, Bangladesh *(1966-1968)* and since the early sixties he is actively involved in the Islamic Dawah work. His written work includes : *Islam : Beliefs and Teachings* (London, 2nd Edition 1982), *Islam For Younger People* (London, 1981), *Syllabus and Guidelines for Islamic Teaching* (London, 2nd Edition 1983). He has also produced teaching aids and Dawah material.

The Muslim Educational Trust is an educational organisation formed in 1966 to cater for the Islamic educational needs of Muslim children in the United Kingdom. Its activities include sending Islamic teachers to the State-run Secondary and Primary Schools, arranging Weekend and Evening schools, preparation and publication of Islamic text books and teaching aids for children and promoting a better understanding of Islam among all sections of the British Society.

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